

What **HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS** Need to Know about Flu



Signs & Symptoms of Flu:

1. Sudden onset of symptoms
2. Fever over 100° F in adults, and as high as 103° to 105° F in children
3. Chills and sweats
4. Headache
5. Dry cough; can become severe
6. Muscle/joint aches and pains
7. Fatigue and weakness
8. Loss of appetite
9. Diarrhea and vomiting

Seasonal & H1N1 Flu

- Flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses; H1N1 is also called “Swine” flu.
- Flu spreads from person to person (cough, sneeze, runny nose).
- In the US, 5% to 20% of the population gets seasonal flu.
- About 36,000 people die annually from flu-related causes in the US.
- H1N1 has caused greater disease burden in people **younger than 25 years of age** than in older people.
- People with certain chronic conditions may be at high risk for serious flu complications and should consult their physician.
- Those infected and contagious can infect others from 1 day before getting sick to 5 to 7 days after, possibly longer in children and people with weakened immune systems.



PLAN NOW...PREVENTION IS KEY!

- **Develop a Business Continuity Plan.** H1N1 flu outbreaks will impact your organization, employees, suppliers of critical material, and your family. Identify your office/clinic’s essential functions and the individuals who perform them. Make sure you have trained enough people to properly work in these essential functions and allow for potential absenteeism. Develop a plan that will sustain your core business activities for several weeks. Make sure you have alternate plans for critical supplies in case there is disruption in your supply chains.
- **Inform employees about your plan for coping with additional surge during pandemic.** Provide clear and frequent communication to ensure that your staff are aware and understand the plan. Explain any policies and procedures that will be used to protect staff and your patients, and to manage a surge of patients. Improve the resiliency of your staff by advising that employees have a pandemic family plan or personal plans.
- **Protect your workplace by asking sick employees to stay home.** All personnel should self monitor daily for signs and symptoms of febrile respiratory illness. Staff who develop these symptoms should be instructed not to report to work, or if at work, should cease patient care activities and notify their supervisor. Be sure to align your sick leave policies so ill staff can stay home or care for sick family members or for children, if schools dismiss students or childcare programs close.
- **Plan to operate your facility if there is significant staff absenteeism.** Cross training your staff is key to resilience here.
- **Plan for a surge of patients and increased demands for your services.** Consider using your telephone system to deliver messages to incoming callers about when to seek medical care at your facility, when to seek emergency care, and where to go for information about caring for a person with flu at home. Consider extending your hours of operation to include telephone triage of patients during a community outbreak.
- **Add a “widget” or “button” to your Web page or employee Web site** so employees can access the latest information on the flu:
 - www.cdc.gov/widgets
 - www.cdc.gov/SocialMedia/Campaigns/H1N1/buttons.html
 - www.hhs.gov/web/library/hhsfluwidgets.html
 - www.flu.gov/news/socialmedia
- **Care for patients with H1N1 flu in your facility.** Make plans to screen patients for signs and symptoms of febrile respiratory illness at entry to the facility. If feasible, use separate waiting and exam rooms for possible H1N1 flu patients; plan to offer surgical masks to symptomatic patients who are able to wear them, provide facial tissues, receptacles for their disposal, and provide hand hygiene products in waiting areas and exam rooms.
- **Take steps to protect the health of your workforce during an outbreak of H1N1.** All healthcare personnel who come in close contact with patients who may have H1N1 flu should use respiratory and eye protection for all patient care activities.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

WWW.MYFDH.ORG • WWW.ODH.OHIO.GOV • WWW.CDC.GOV • WWW.FLU.GOV
1-800-CDC-INFO